Urban Planning
2025 • Volume 10 • Article 9123
https://doi.org/10.17645/up.9123

cogitatio

ARTICLE

Open Access Journal

The Poly-Rhythmic City: Urban Community Land Trusts as Opposition to the Slow Violence of Housing Development

Robert Read [1,2], NezHapi-Dellé Odeleye [3], Alison Hirst [1], and Alison Pooley [2]

[1] Faculty of Business & Law, Anglia Ruskin University, UK
[2] Suffolk Sustainability Institute, University of Suffolk, UK
[3] Faculty of Science & Engineering, Anglia Ruskin University, UK

Correspondence: Robert Read (r.read2@uos.ac.uk)

Submitted: 1 August 2024 **Accepted:** 30 March 2025 **Published:** 30 April 2025

Issue: This article is part of the issue "Place-Shaping Through and With Time: Urban Planning as a Temporal Art and Social Science" edited by NezHapi-Dellé Odeleye (Anglia Ruskin University), Lakshmi Priya Rajendran (University College London), and Aysegul Can (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology), fully open access at https://doi.org/10.17645/up.i393

Abstract

Gradual and invisible, "slow violence" has been applied to housing and urban redevelopment, gentrification, and its embodiment as stress and anxiety by those affected, usually the least well-off. This article presents a case study of the London Community Land Trust (CLT), which was engendered from a combination of the longstanding traditions of East End opposition to social harms, combined with new mutual housing forms that emerged in the early 2000s. Campaigners invested energy in the CLT, generating new rhythms and an imagination of territory that would provide an alternative to the failure of mainstream housing systems. The homes would be affordable to local people on average incomes and the neighbourhood characterised by a sense of belonging and community. The case study's findings offer a fresh perspective on London's housing crisis, and the potential of CLTs, by centring the experience and reflections of some whose lack of a suitable home threatened them with spatial displacement. Participant observation, surveys, and interviews with residents show the depth and impact of London's housing crisis through reflections on the past, the joys and challenges of moving to an affordable, secure home, while building new relationships with neighbours and the physical environment.

Keywords

community land trust; community-led housing; slow opposition; slow violence; territorialisation

1. Introduction

Community land trusts (CLTs) in the UK emerged in the early 2000s, as part of a family of housing types challenging the dominance of mainstream owner occupation, and private and social renting (Moore & McKee, 2012; Mullins & Moore, 2018). CLTs, co-housing, co-operatives, and community self-build—collectively labelled community-led housing (CLH) (Mullins, 2018)—are celebrated for enabling local communities to have agency in defining housing needs and providing the right types of homes in their area. Studies have analysed the spatial context, including urban and rural areas, place attachment, uneven urban development, and CLTs reviving "the commons" (Bunce, 2016; Moore, 2021; Moore & McKee, 2012; Thompson, 2015, 2020). Others focus on policy, support infrastructures, and the potential for scaling up (Hughes, 2024; Moore, 2018; Moore & Mullins, 2013). Temporally, Thompson (2015, 2020) noted how the incremental approach of Liverpool CLTs mirrors the collective involvement of earlier generations of housing alternatives in the form of co-operatives. CLH has been conceptualised as "slow opposition" to mainstream housing development, affiliating campaigners with similar localist, organically grown movements—"slow food" for example (Jarvis, 2015). However, few spatio-temporal case studies involve CLT residents, most limited to advocacy and pre-occupation phases (Kruger et al., 2020; Mullins & Moore, 2018).

Meanwhile, housing studies mobilising the concept of "slow violence" as "a gradual and/or invisible form of violence" have primarily focused on specific urban regeneration schemes (Keller, 2024, p. 1256). They demonstrate the embodiment of slow-violence by low-income residents in the stress and anxiety caused by endless "waiting" and uncertainty before their inevitable permanent or temporary displacement enables their home's destruction or redevelopment (Keller, 2024; Westbrook et al., 2024).

This article examines the case of London CLT and the UK's first urban CLT homes at the former St Clements Hospital in Mile End, East London. In 2019, 23 average-income households in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets moved into the properties London CLT acquired as part of the affordable housing contribution for St Clements' redevelopment. While impacting most acutely its poorest and marginalised citizens, London's housing crisis is increasingly affecting people with incomes that once offered protection from housing insecurity—threatening their ability to remain in the city (Watt & Minton, 2016). Using data from interviews, participant observation, and online and physical documents, this article addresses gaps in existing CLT and slow violence research, contributing to knowledge in three key dimensions. Firstly, it includes the perspectives of CLT residents alongside board members, moving consideration of temporality from a theoretical level to one revealing a range of embodied rhythms. Secondly, it extends the use of slow violence from specific urban redevelopment projects to a broader, spatially distinct area, and its impact on median-income earners. Finally, the article introduces a third term to mediate between the binaries of slow violence and slow opposition by analysing London CLT and residents' actions through the lens of territorialisation—their relationships with each other and their physical space (Brighenti, 2010; Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2018, 2020).

The article continues with a review of selected literature on territorialisation, slow violence, and CLTs, followed by the study's methodology, findings, and discussion before drawing some conclusions.

2. Literature Review: Rhythms of Territorialisation, Slow Violence, and the Slow Opposition of CLTs

In considering London CLT's attempts to offer alternatives to existing housing systems and urban redevelopment, this article combines three concepts to help understand the roles of the various actors: territorialisation (Brighenti, 2010; Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2018, 2020), slow violence (Nixon, 2011), and slow opposition (Jarvis, 2015).

2.1. Territorialisation, Slow Violence, and Slow Opposition in London's East End

Like all space, the East End is a product of the prevailing economic model (Lefebvre, 1991). Transformation from the city's rural food producer to the location for industrialisation's most toxic trades and its gateway, via the docks, to colonised lands produced the East End as the "largest impoverished urban enclave in the world" by the 19th century (Dench et al., 2006, p. 1). In modern times, it finds itself wedged between London's two centres of international capitalism—the city to the west and Canary Wharf to the south (see map in Figure 1).

Space is also comprised of relations between people and their physical surroundings which, combined with simultaneously constructed boundaries, produce territories (Brighenti, 2010; Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2018, 2020). East End territories have been shaped by relations including those of work, class, family, residence, religion, immigration, and gentrification. For space to continue serving the economy, the state and market must exert power and control, repurposing parts no longer serving its interests, and fragmenting territories in the process (Lefebvre, 1991). This has been conceived as "slow violence" (Nixon, 2011): gradual, insidious, and hidden by its normalisation as logical economic, urban, and housing policy (Rannila, 2021). It has manifested itself in the East End through industrialisation, de-industrialisation, state-led gentrification, and the threatened and actual exclusion of those unable to continue living decently in the City (Lees & Hubbard, 2022; Watt & Minton, 2016).

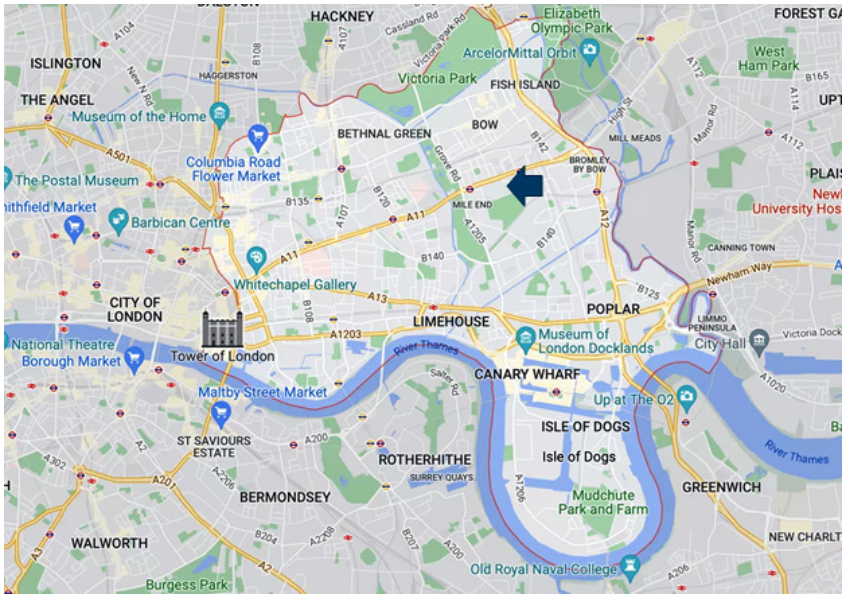

Figure 1. London's East End. Note: The position of St Clements is marked with an arrow. Source: Alexander (2022).

Power, control, and slow violence are not endured passively though; they co-exist with conflict, resistance, and territorialisation (Storey, 2001). The East End has taken on recognisable spatio-temporal characteristics, comprising community organising, philanthropy, and social work—all infused with religious faith (Back et al., 2009). Longstanding, enduring opposition is institutionalised in faith and community institutions, attempting to mitigate slow violence's worst impacts. Occasionally, new territorial relations are "animated" (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2020), such as London CLT, which merged the East End's traditional forms of resistance with the slow opposition of the emerging CLH and CLT movement.

The relationship between these three concepts, considered separately in the next section, and how their co-existing manifestations in the East End produced St Clements in its current form is illustrated in the conceptual framework in Figure 2.

2.2. Territorialisation

Territorialisation has been associated with the exercise of power, "the attempt to affect, influence, or control actions and interactions…by asserting and attempting to enforce control over a geographic area" (Sack, 1983, p. 55). It has been applied to macro-scale actions of states and micro-scale claims on space in the home, conflict, and resistance co-existing with territorialisation and power (Storey, 2001). This article adopts Brighenti's (2010, p. 57) conception of territory as the interrelations between people and their social and material spaces: "territory is not defined by space, rather it defines spaces through patterns of relations." Territorialisation is temporal and rhythmic, containing a plurality of temporalities to produce distinctive time spaces (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2020). Rhythm is produced by "investments of energy, or intensities that accompany it…investments in social life as meaning and as concerted action" (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2018, p. 2). These investments produce "animative moments," the gathering of actors emerging as a collective entity, where "space is set into play, and different aspects of life are at stake" (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2020, p. 17).

Domestic territorialisation is where "ecological and spiritual factors are intermingled," while temporally, "frequentation" produces a home through the quantity and quality of time spent there and the assemblage of physical, emotional, and social aspects (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2020, p. 115). While always unique, domestic territorialisation involves associations made with other homes and with human, and non-human, neighbours.

A territorial lens affords a spatio-temporal and relational view of London CLT's morphogenesis, its relation to becoming and the "slow, dynamic, and multitemporal processes inherent to it" (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2020, p. 57). It draws attention to how power exercised at global and regional levels shaped the East End historically and continues to reshape it through urban redevelopment, resulting in forms of "slow violence." Simultaneously, it shows how such violence results in de-territorialisation, fragmenting relationships, followed by re-territorialisation as new ones are formed. Brighenti (2010, p. 63), after Deleuze and Guattari, argues that it is this "double movement…that evokes the primitive movement of territorialization, which otherwise tends to be taken for granted" (See Figure 2).

2.3. Urban Redevelopment and Slow Violence

Urban redevelopment is frequently driven by events occurring at regional, national, and even global scales (Zaban, 2023). Subsequently, programmes can be drawn out over prolonged periods, with those with capital

and power controlling time for the less well-off (Keller, 2024). Urban redevelopment, mostly occurring in the poorest neighbourhoods, typically involves cycles of dilapidation and decay, before their symbolic designation as unfit places; redevelopment decisions often come years before action, preceding managed decline (Lees & Hubbard, 2022). Residents experience uncertainty, insecurity, and seemingly endless "waiting," the "unmaking" of home occurring long before residents lose their physical dwellings (Arrigoitia, 2014; Keller, 2024; Westbrook et al., 2024). Residents' existence in this liminal space has been conceptualised as "slow violence," which, following Nixon's (2011, p. 2) definition, occurs "gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all."

Slow violence is part of a "provocative…structural 'violence turn'" in housing studies, positioning limited housing choices not as the outcome of personal failure, individual decisions, or poor life choices, but of political economy (Gurney, 2023, p. 237). Violence inflicted by urban redevelopment results from ostensibly normal, legal, seemingly progressive, and justifiable actions, only becoming apparent when the impact on individual neighbourhoods and people is seen and understood (Rannila, 2021). Residents embody slow violence as stress caused by "temporal uncertainty" about the future and "displacement anxiety," impacting their health and well-being (Westbrook et al., 2024).

Zaban (2023) observes multi-temporality in competing perspectives of stakeholders in urban redevelopment, causing asynchronicity; "worldly imaginaries and experience" of planners and developers bringing a different view of the proper pace of change than the "place attachment and belonging" of long-term residents (Zaban, 2023, p. 1513). Meanwhile, marginal gentrifiers (Rose, 1996)—newcomers to poor neighbourhoods—who enhance the area's credentials without significantly increasing its wealth, may benefit from and champion redevelopment (Zaban, 2023). Kern (2016, p. 442) noted how middle-class occupants in a post-industrial Toronto neighbourhood transformed social space through "new rhythms and timespaces of everyday life": cultural events, craft markets, and "authenticity" recreated through "sophisticated consumption" (Bourdieu, 1984) of retro chic. Longer-term inhabitants, having lost their own indicators of place, and unable to participate in the neighbourhoods' new rhythms and "performative codes," found themselves subject to temporal displacement (Kern, 2016, p. 442).

Preece and Flint (2024) extend the social harms conceptualisation, from the least well-off to homeowners in blocks of flats with combustible cladding like that which fueled the catastrophic Grenfell Tower fire. Having endured longstanding but invisible danger, they were rendered "unhomed," either psychologically by fears for their safety, or physically when forced to leave. While marginalised communities have become inured to the state's indifference, these more affluent leaseholders "struggled to reconcile it with their own biographies, trajectories, and self-perception" (Preece & Flint, 2024, p. 105).

Slow violence is not simply experienced passively, with many residents and community organisations actively resisting (Keller, 2024), such is the case with CLTs.

2.4. CLTs and Slow Opposition

Defined as "democratic, non-profit organisations owning and developing land for the benefit of the community" (CLT Network, n.d., para. 1), CLTs emerged in the UK alongside the 2005 New Labour

government's policy of devolving power to local government and communities and against a backdrop of falling levels of affordable housing (Moore & McKee, 2012). Through long-term ownership and stewardship, CLTs capture the land value, locking in future increases, and ensuring homes built remain affordable in perpetuity (Diacon et al., 2005).

The model gained legal status in the 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act, enabling CLTs to take ownership of land and other assets for community benefit. This has largely, though not exclusively, meant providing affordable housing. In 2015, the government announced a five-year (later reduced to four) Community Housing Fund to support new groups, provide capital for building homes, and create support structures (Hill et al., 2020).

Urban CLTs have been associated with distinct spatio-temporalities and socio-political roots and ambitions beyond providing affordable housing; Liverpool CLTs arose from existing residents struggling against post-war disinvestment and dilapidation (Thompson, 2015). Though London CLT's impetus differed in meeting housing needs in an inflated housing market, Bunce (2016) argues that it too was engaged in the creation of a new "urban commons." This long-term, gradual struggle resembles Ward's (1974) "encroaching control," stealthily extending the idea of cooperative ownership and self-management.

While advocates stress that CLT developments are not intrinsically slower than the mainstream (Archer & McCarthy, 2021), Jarvis (2015, p. 204) notes the connection between the "convivial scale of citizen participation in 'slow' quality of life movements and new forms of citizenship associated with CLH." "Slow" here is spatial as well as temporal, "slow food" movements, for example, privileging local traditions and flavours over globally available "fast food." Applied to housing, "slow" emphasises the active involvement of ordinary citizens in identifying local housing needs and aspirations, often aligned to long-term environmental sustainability and maintaining a sense of place. For Jarvis (2015), authentic citizen involvement is not an event, like consultations, but the gradual cultivation and flourishing of public life requiring "craft" skills to "act together" (Sennett, 2013)—Figure 2 summarises these conceptualisations and relationships in London's East End & St Clements.

3. Methodology

3.1. Empirical Setting

London CLT, originally formed as East London CLT in 2007, initially aimed to provide affordable housing as part of the London 2012 Olympics legacy, before shifting attention to the closed and boarded-up St Clements hospital. It became London CLT when campaigners in Lewisham, Southeast London, asked for help developing 11 flats, completed in 2023 and called Citizens House. While most CLTs, including in London, have a narrower geographic focus, London CLT provides governance, knowledge, and skills to support people across London to build the affordable housing they campaign for. London CLT provided the case study for the first author's PhD thesis, chosen following engagement with various urban CLH organisations in East Anglia, East and Southeast London.

London's East End is ideally positioned for investigating slow violence due to its historic association with poverty, the working class and immigration, along with the pronounced impact of housing and urban policy.

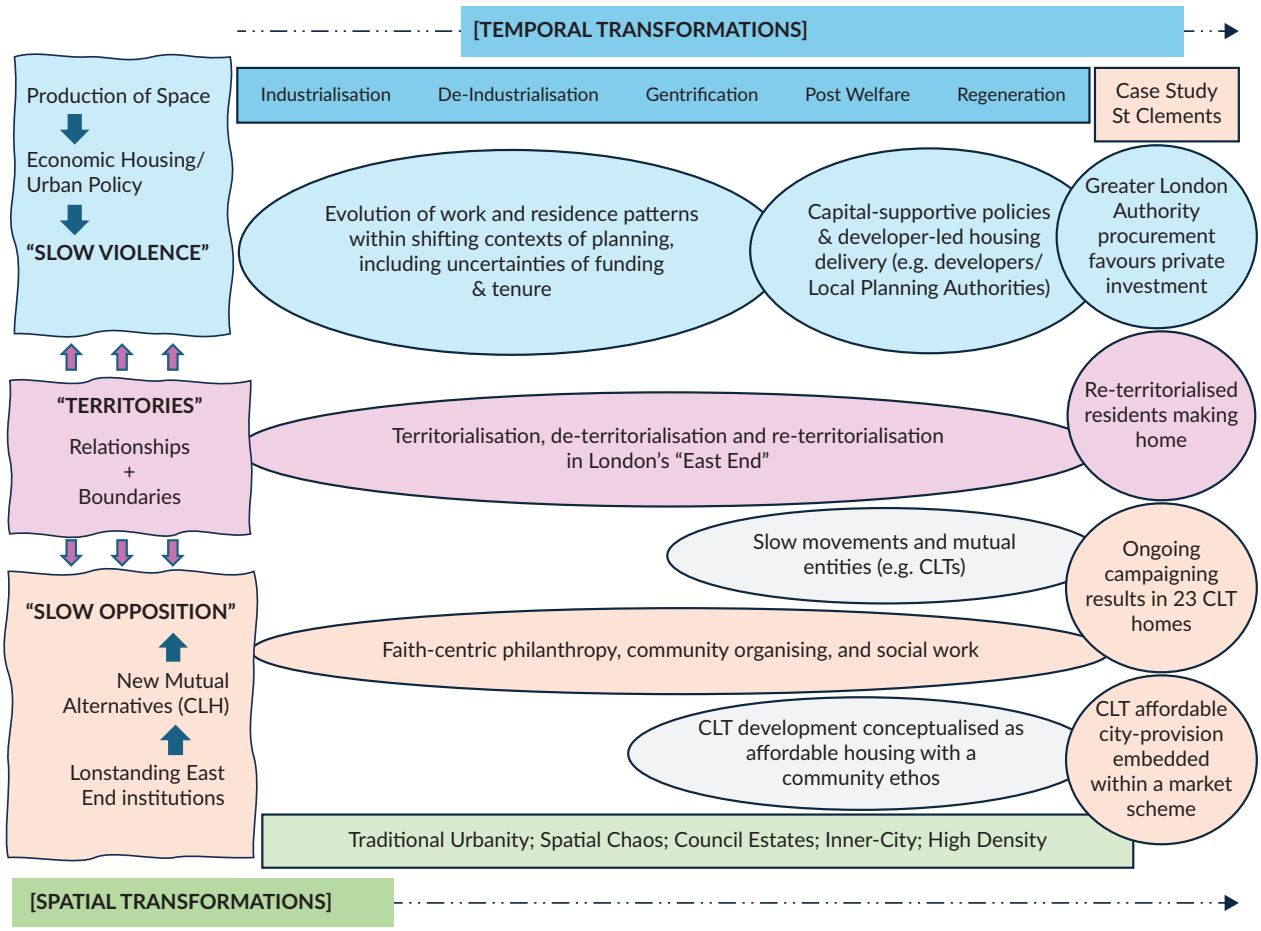

Figure 2. Conceptual framework and the production of St Clements.

In 1981, 82% of Tower Hamlets residents lived in council housing—the highest percentage in London—and just 20 years later "social housing" accounted for only 36% (Watt & Minton, 2016), with the "right-to-buy" council housing without replenishment, financialisation, and state-led gentrification of estates all contributing (Hodkinson, 2020; Lees & Hubbard, 2022; Watt, 2021; Watt & Minton, 2016). While average house prices were five times the median earnings in 2000, they rose to 12 times by 2020 (Office for National Statistics, 2023a).

Simultaneously, London CLT is a good case for studying opposition to slow violence. With its roots in community organising and faith organisations, it connects the traditional "enduring" opposition to slow violence in the East End with the emerging "slow" mutuality of CLH forms in the early 21st century. London CLT recognised that housing precarity affected not just the least well-off but increasingly middle-income earners in critical, community-facing roles. When the research was conducted, only London CLT had homes built and occupied in the capital, allowing the study to hear from residents with expertise by experience of slow violence, slow opposition, and territorialisation.

St Clements' redevelopment consisted of refurbishing the centrally listed buildings and constructing new flatted blocks around the perimeter, producing 252 new properties: 58 for "social rent," 23 CLT, and the remainder for open-market sales (London CLT, n.d.). CLT residents were selected by criteria assessing

housing need, affordability, local connection, community contribution, and commitment to London CLT's values. After joining the CLT, successful applicants bought the homes, dispersed amongst the new-builds, for 27% of the open-market value (London CLT, n.d.).

Data provided by London CLT shows St Clements' demographic breakdown, with residents broadly matching Tower Hamlets' ethnicity mix (Figure 3), while most adults fall within its low to low-middle income bands (Figure 4). The final chart shows the range of household types (Figure 5).

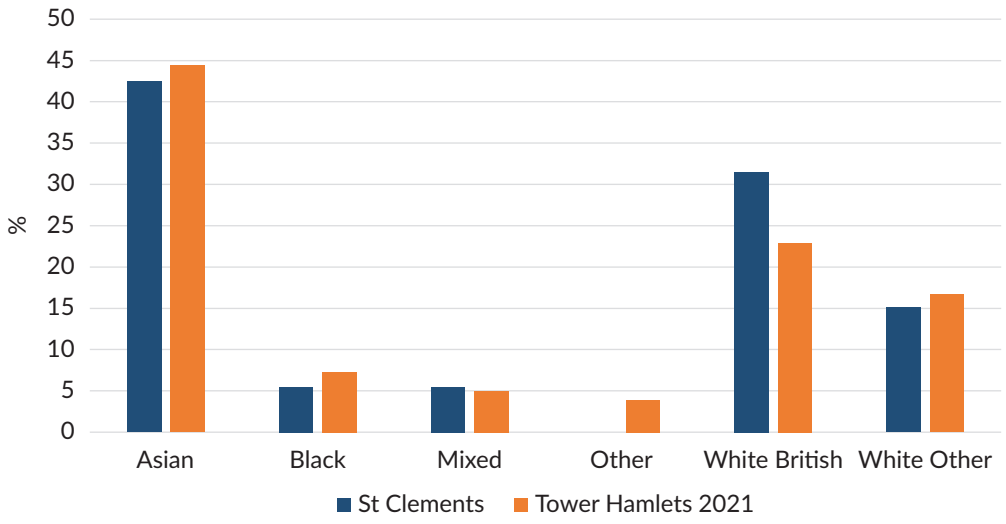

Figure 3. St Clements CLT residents—ethnicity, compared with London Borough Tower Hamlets. Note: Based on personal communication with London CLT (2023) and data from the Office for National Statistics (2023b).

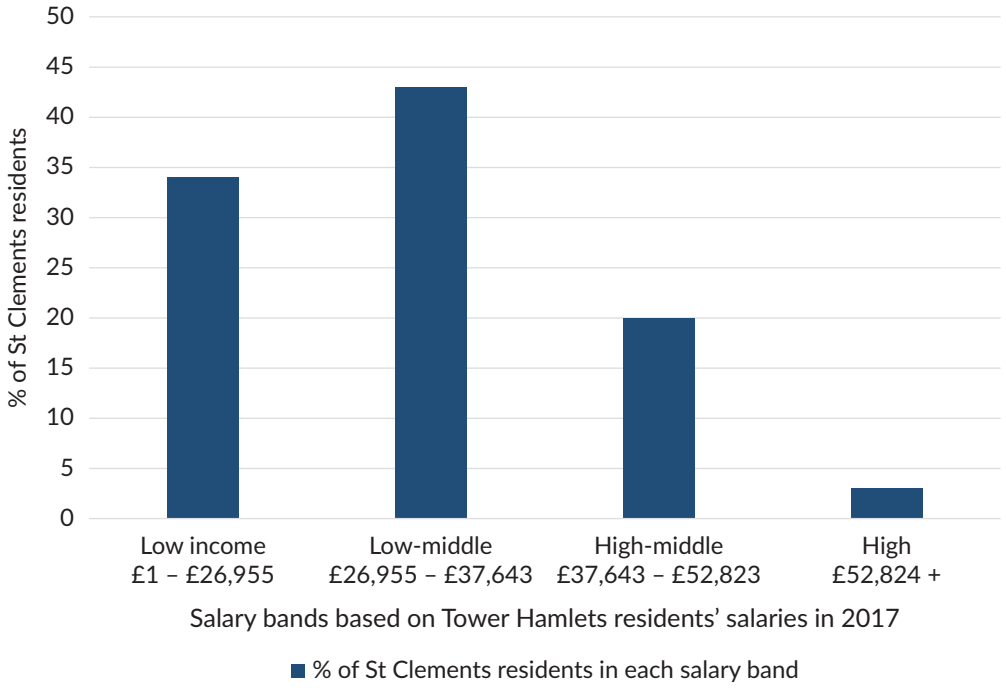

Figure 4. Annual salaries of St Clements residents by salary bands 2017. Note: Based on personal communication with London CLT (2023).

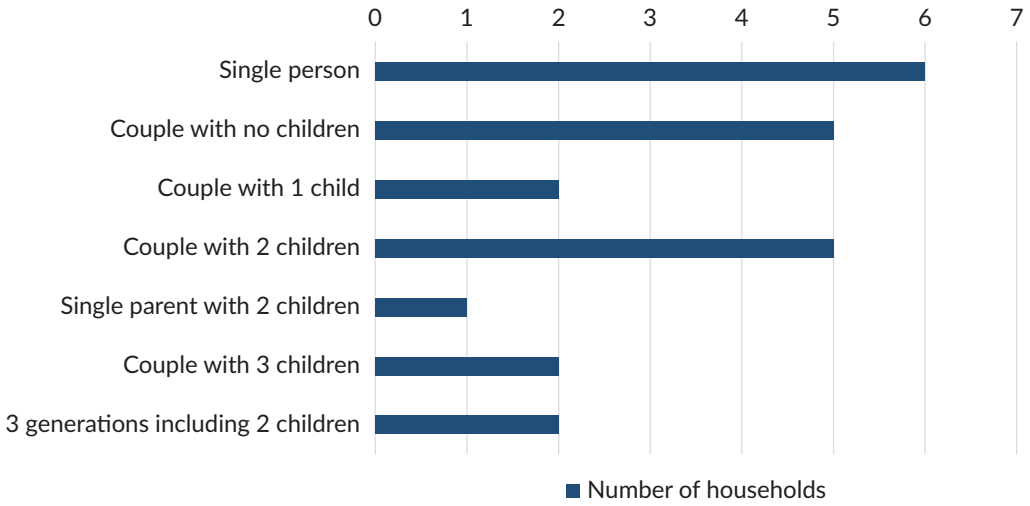

Figure 5. St Clements CLT residents—household composition (initial allocation). Note: Based on personal communication with London CLT (2023).

3.2. Fieldwork

A case study methodology was considered the best way to conduct an "in-depth enquiry into a specific and complex phenomenon [London CLT as a case of CLH] set within its real-world context" (Yin, 2013, p. 321). Data was initially sourced from the websites of CLH support organisations and London CLT's own (Community Led Housing London, n.d; CLT Network, n.d; London CLT, n.d.). Data included summaries of CLH initiatives, reports, photographs, blogs, and video recordings; London CLT's website contained testimonies from residents. Between September 2021 and October 2023, semi-structured interviews were conducted with London CLT staff and board members, and with 15 St Clements' residents from 11 unique households. Due to considerable interest from media, built-environment professionals, researchers, and community groups in St Clements, London CLT were initially reluctant to directly ask residents to take part. However, they enabled the researcher to recruit participants directly by inviting them to meetings, events, and community celebrations that simultaneously provided opportunities for participant observation. Data were captured in fieldnotes, while events provided opportunities to meet residents informally. Snowballing through residents' personal contacts and social media channels provided the primary participant recruitment method, made additionally challenging by the early stages of the research coinciding with Covid-19 lockdowns and ongoing sensitivity to personal contact. Unfortunately, due to their absence from meetings and events, no responses to social media messages, or later CLT encouragement, the researcher was unable to meet any of the Bengali households, around a third of St Clements' CLT residents. The findings therefore remain partial and future research should seek to examine the experience of this important group of residents.

Resident interviews were face-to-face, in homes or cafes, and online during Covid lockdowns, lasting between one and two hours. Discussion included previous housing circumstances, local connection, community contribution, finding out about St Clements, moving in and the impact of moving, St Clements as a place to live, community involvement, and thoughts on their future. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher, transcripts producing between 7,400 and 17,500 words.

3.3. Analysis

Data from websites, official and unofficial documentation, interviews with staff and board members, and fieldnotes built a temporal picture of London CLT, St Clements, and residents' self-organisation through a Resident Management Company and community events. Interview data were analysed through an amalgam of "meaning condensation" (Kvale, 2012) and "systematic text condensation" (Malterud, 2012). Interview transcripts were read twice before being separated into meaning units: "a text fragment containing some information about the research question" (Malterud, 2012, p. 797). These were condensed, or summarised, from the interviewee's perspective, and coded using an abductive approach (van Hulst & Visser, 2024), iterating between theory and all the data collected. Codes were assembled into themes, with one theme comprising the different ways slow violence had manifested itself in residents' previous housing circumstances—overcrowded in shared ownership and unable to afford to move, for example. Another theme was their deterritorialisation, how needing to find a housing solution meant having to consider leaving the neighbourhood they called home. Codes represented different responses, such as moving back in with parents to save, moving to temporary property guardianship, or making existing circumstances as homely as possible. A further theme was the prior relationship residents had with London CLT and the institutions involved in opposing slow violence.

The names of all participants in this article have been replaced by pseudonyms.

4. Findings

4.1. London's East End: Rhythmic Territories of Power, Slow Violence, and Resistance

In 1849, the City of London Poor Law Union built the Bow Road Workhouse (The Workhouse, n.d.), later converted into an infirmary for the assessment of "mental patients," then the City of London Institution for the "chronically ill" (Roman Road London, 2021). It was renamed St Clements in 1936 and absorbed by the new National Health Service after the war, undertaking pioneering work to treat 1960s adolescent heroin addiction. St Clements was declared unfit to treat patients in 2006, its role in mitigating the impact of slow-violence inflicted on the East End paused until its next incarnation included the country's first urban CLT homes.

In the 1990s, new relationships were built between long-standing East End institutions, the "animistic moment" coming with the arrival of Neil Jameson, a Quaker, who wanted to establish a new, nationwide, social justice organisation from the East End (Warren, 2009). Former London CLT chair, Geoff, explained Jameson's influences:

> He went over to the US and trained with the Industrial Areas Foundation, which was founded by Saul Alinsky in Chicago in the 1930s. So, there's a long track record of this activity, community organising, in the States going back to the 1930s.

Jameson was conscious of the East End's community organising legacy—the "rich history of people who came before me" as community organisers: the Matchgirl Strikers, George Lansbury's municipal socialism, and Cable Street's anti-fascists (Jameson, 2019). He recognised an opportunity to build the new organisation's first branch, The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO), in the growing Muslim

population, alongside the established Catholic community (Warren, 2009). The enduring resistance to slow violence had engendered cross-faith alliances: between Jews and Irish Roman Catholics in the 1930s and Bangladeshi Muslims with the Church of England in the 1970s (Glynn, 2005). Geoff was involved in TELCO from the start, and his Methodist church was a sponsoring organisation. He explained their slow, deliberative approach to building effective alliances:

> It took us three years to find 30 organisations that were prepared to go in and put their money on the table…the Mosque, the Church, and the Synagogue, which wouldn't normally meet with the school, were all in the same room, getting to know each other…the community organising methodology is relationship before action. If you haven't got the relationships, you don't go to the action.

TELCO sought to first empower the community leaders within institutions (Balazard et al., 2017; Wills, 2012). Through multiple one-to-one conversations, they would develop the ability of communities to recognise, prioritise, and address their own needs. Consequently, more affordable housing, depleted due to the slow-violence of consecutive national housing policies, became one of TELCO's first campaigning priorities. Geoff, the Former London CLT chair explained:

> Thatcher had sold off all the council houses…the residue of homes that were available for people who were not on good incomes had been obliterated virtually hadn't they? People had sold them on, and they'd made a nice packet very often, but their children and grandchildren were stuck because there was nowhere for them to live. So, we were saying, well, if the market has failed, what else can we do?

The social profile of some of those experiencing housing needs had changed from when council housing dominated, reflecting the area's ongoing and significant population shifts. By the early 1970s, the East End was deindustrialising, and anti-establishment middle classes began squatting in empty buildings, inadvertently initiating future gentrification (Dench et al., 2006; Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020). The arrival of intermediate non-manual workers in the 1980s (Butler et al., 2008) is often conceptualised as "marginal gentrification," enhancing the area's credentials without significantly increasing its wealth (Rose, 1996). Others note a "fragmented middle-class" presence, with jobs in the arts, and the devalued public sector, often with non-linear or broken career paths (Watt, 2005). However, the 1990s influx of professional classes brought soaring increases in new housing development and property values, especially close to the City and Canary Wharf (Fenton, 2016). Between 2001 and 2011, the "creative class" increased by 50%, mostly around Brick Lane and Spitalfields (Hubbard, 2016; le Grand, 2020). TELCO recognised these changes meant London's housing market was now failing not only the least well-off but increasingly those in professional occupations. Geoff explained:

> It seemed to us that the market catered for the people who were wealthy enough. Social housing and housing associations catered for people who were on the lower end, but there was a gap for people in the middle who were quite important members of the professions, who were being left out…all of them doing really important jobs in the community.

In 2003, the UK announced its bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games, centred in East London. This would be a "mega-event," "organised via a social elite…to affirm or catalyse its economic, cultural and social development or renewal" (Poynter, 2009, p. 133). Following initial scepticism about its benefits, TELCO

made its support for the Games conditional on organisers signing a People's Ethical Guarantee, which was assembled after "thousands of conversations" in the local community (Gotora, 2022). TELCO secured a deal with then London mayor, Ken Livingstone, and Lord Sebastian Coe, the bid team's Chair, including commitments to a living wage games, local employment, and a legacy of 2,012 affordable CLT homes (Smith, 2020). With the bid successful, communication with TELCO stopped until—after further lobbying—the new Olympic Delivery Authority declared the protocol its predecessor body signed, non-binding (Smith, 2020). Agreement to CLT homes became contingent on a pilot elsewhere in London: until that point, UK CLTs were confined to rural and coastal areas.

The state-led regeneration accompanying the 2012 Olympic Games in East London perpetuated polarisation between wealthier new and existing working-class and marginalised communities, exacerbating displacement pressures (Poynter, 2009; Watt, 2013). Despite promising a social inclusion model, and renewal of deprived boroughs, the Games were a display of direct state intervention in the production of space (Poynter, 2009). Watt (2013, p. 114) found people living in working-class spaces near the Olympic Park did not consider the "upmarket private apartments for sale or rent, as having much to do with them." Even for many earning median salaries, including those successfully applying for a CLT home, the Olympics only made their struggles to secure a suitable home in the area harder.

4.2. The Impact of Slow Violence, Temporal Displacement, and Spatial Dispersal

St Clements residents have multiple life courses, trajectories, and connections with Tower Hamlets. While some were born in the Borough, others moved there in the 1990s or early 2000s. Their housing tenures varied, but all were living in housing that did not enable them to feel at home (Richardson, 2019).

Three families had been living in shared ownership flats, a tenure where buyers acquire a mortgage for part of the property's value and pay rent for the remainder. Over time, shared owners theoretically "staircase" to higher levels of equity. Though designated by the government as "affordable housing," when Gabriel and his wife considered moving to a larger flat to comfortably accommodate his family, he found the cost prohibitive: "One was [£]900,000. Okay, 50%, 40% [mortgage]…plus the rent, plus the service charge…it was just not feasible…add everything up, and then it's not that affordable."

Nancy, who moved to East London in the 1990s, owned 25% equity in a one-bedroom flat. A single parent, she slept in a foldout bed in the living room, her son and daughter sharing the bedroom. Though Nancy's earnings were above average for the Borough, she could not afford to move somewhere larger, describing her daily routine to maintain a semblance of a family home as "quite stressful….I would get up in the morning, immediately fold up the bed, leave it there and then in the evening immediately fold it back out again so that it felt like we had a living space during the day."

The slow-violence of the housing economy is experienced differently by these shared owners than by those displaced by regeneration programmes impacting specific estates or neighbourhoods. "Waiting," for Nancy and Gabriel, was not for their landlord or developer to tell them to leave, or when they can return to a refurbished home. Instead, waiting was a question of endurance, of seeing how long they could tolerate increasingly unsatisfactory circumstances. These are not personal failures, but social harms caused by the structuring of the housing economy. Nancy struggled with lack of privacy and her inability to control the

time she had to herself, saying "I am very much an introvert you know, I like to have my own space." She embodied the slow-violence as stress, as did her daughter who had to share a bedroom with her younger brother, despite her being a teenager. The "displacement anxiety" (Westbrook et al., 2024) meanwhile came from the knowledge that unless the waiting somehow produced an alternative, finding somewhere affordable of sufficient size and quality would likely mean moving somewhere housing costs were cheaper.

For James, working in a hospital brought eligibility for a key-worker scheme, enduring rising costs after his flat was sold to a Housing Association, the deal allowing annual 9% rent increases. Meanwhile, dampness and mould exacerbated his child's existing allergies. Moving elsewhere though, James said, would mean paying twice his existing rent, leading to a feeling of both being "unhomed" (Preece & Flint, 2024), given his existing flat no longer provided the necessary quality of space and affordability, and living in a liminal space in which no possible future could be planned for.

Joanna and Leon also qualified for key-worker housing, but for them, the impact came suddenly, when their housing association landlord decided to sell their flat. Unable to afford the market price, the couple and their children faced eviction, described by Joanna as moving from a "quite safe arrangement to actually becoming almost homeless." Joanna experienced anxiety about displacement from her home and neighbourhood, severing her from strong connections made since emigrating from Eastern Europe: "I can't imagine moving out of the community. Like a huge loss for us really leaving this place, almost like moving to another country again…yes, I felt quite rooted."

Joanna and Leon discovered the CLT by chance, going past St Clements on the bus, Joanna's attention was drawn to the adverts for affordable housing due to a professional connection with the hospital. Alice, on the other hand, was aware of the housing project from its inception due to previous involvement with TELCO. As a child, arriving with her family as refugees, Alice suffered carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty boiler in temporary accommodation. As an adult, after a series of "really, really bad flat shares," amidst rapidly rising rents in the pre-Olympics period, Alice moved to a new-build flat. Within five years, the rent increased fivefold while "the building was basically falling apart….We had a leak that was through the living room. Literally, we had to have three buckets. Nothing got fixed."

Alice's experience as a refugee meant waiting was routine, along with the repetition of presenting documents to various agencies of the state in a bid to find out, "am I worthy?" Applying for housing at St Clement's, having to present herself as "vulnerable" and "in need," again supplying the right documents was "re-traumatising." However, Alice also understood how a secure, affordable, and good-quality home would enable her and her partner to take some control over the planning of major life events. Alice noticed how some in her peer group were having children due to support from well-off parents, and how that gave them more control over time. For Alice, that security blanket did not exist:

> It was very difficult to think about having a family in [an] unstable, leaking accommodation, it felt probably it would be a bit irresponsible…there wasn't a way to go, "Mum, you know I want to have a baby, that money you saved…."

Most households had considered the impact spatial displacement—moving from the place they called home—would have. Alice's ethnicity, faith, refugee history, and career in the charity sector are bound up with the neighbourhood she has lived in most of her life:

> I love to be in a city where I can buy cultural food, I want to be able to go to a shop and get my, you know, my bananas and beans….I wanna be able to do my hair locally, and get it braided…those are the things that become then compromised.

Like Alice, Nathalie did not experience slow violence passively, her experience illustrating how the polyrhythms of territorialisation, slow violence, and slow opposition are embodied within the same household. Nathalie and her partner lived in a two-bedroom shared ownership flat with "two girls, one gone through puberty, and a little boy sharing a bedroom." Though not born in East London, it is where they "put down roots and raise[d] children." While connections to the City came through their work and outside interests, at a neighbourhood level, having children meant "everything becomes very interconnected…your friends are through children and you're helping out the playgroup."

Territories are constructed from these every day relationships and the boundaries established (Brighenti, 2010), however porous. Families moving to St Clement's had similar frames of reference, some knowing each other from school or local dance classes. Interviewees spoke affectionately about their connections and the quality of relationships and spaces used, such as parks and nature reserves. Her family's housing situation led to Nathalie trying to take control over their impending displacement, working out:

> How much of a commute we could tolerate…looking, I mean, at mad places with no connection in terms of family or prior knowledge…a mathematical equation…what do we need to live? Where can we do that, [and] on what budget? And then I thought, this is insane.

Joining the CLT campaign, Nathalie embodied the feeling of it as "revolutionary…very exhilarating," while simultaneously, "it sucked up months and years of my life, not in a bad way but I think, you know, it sort of did have an impact on the family." Nathalie sensed progress being made but "temporal uncertainty" about the future and "displacement anxiety" remained (Westbrook et al., 2024). These were embodied, with the family still severely overcrowded, by Nathalie's partner experiencing poor mental health on top of existing health conditions. Even if the campaign for the homes to be built was successful, Nathalie knew, "there's no guarantee that there's a place for us."

Lisa has multi-generational roots in Tower Hamlets, both she and her partner grew up on council estates close to St Clements. With many of her family and friends moving out and herself unable to find somewhere secure and affordable, she felt what Fullilove (2020, p. 184) describes as "wounds" inflicted through "serial displacement…the truncation and dispersal of networks, and accumulation of sorrow." Without the secure council housing her parents enjoyed, the couple moved from one insecure rental to another, meaning they "never really put roots down, because we always thought, oh we might be moving." Meanwhile, with some considerable irony, streets like those where previous generations of Lisa's family lived are now designated conservation areas (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2017): "I look in the…estate agents' windows…someone's selling one of the properties down there and I'm like, it's [£]1.2 million! And I'm like, really?…it's just ridiculous."

Moving to the East End with the influx of other "intermediate workers," Gabriel and his partner made lasting connections in the neighbourhood they lived in, through schools, local facilities, and shops, but subsequent gentrification impacted their ability to inhabit the space, making it unrecognisable:

> It's nice to live in [a] bohemian area, nice shops or independent shops, bars…it's also nice sometimes not to have to pay almost £4 for a coffee [laughs]…can we just have a proper "caff," normal? And that is disappearing from that area quickly.

Several St Clements residents were able to take this nuanced view of the area's development, understanding the improvements brought by redevelopments while also mourning the loss of their neighbourhood's identity. They understood some of the new "performative codes," possessed some of the social capital and "cosmopolitan knowledge" (Bridge, 2007) but unlike those in Zaban's (2023) study, lacked the economic capital, or sometimes the will, to take advantage of mainstream redevelopment. Ella and John, attracted by East London's arts scene, cultural diversity, and relatively cheaper rent, had been housed for a while as part of a subsidised artist residency programme. Afterwards, they took up the option of property guardianship through an organisation offering affordable rents in exchange for "giving back" to the community through volunteering. John said living on an estate awaiting redevelopment brought "some unpleasantness…living on a semi-derelict site…kids tried to break into our house in the night." Ella meanwhile was concerned about complicity in others' "displacement [and] dispossession," while John feared being "co-opted into the gentrification of the area…these methods of housing tend to lean towards creative practitioners because they're on unstable wages."

While such property guardianship promises "homes," for Ella and John they provided a liminal space allowing only respite from ever-present "displacement anxiety." Ella described it as "like a broken record, every Sunday we would sort of circulate back to that question of where shall we go." However, with family, friends, and work all centring around London, the reasons for wanting to stay were "financial and kind of emotional and practical as well."

These examples highlight how the existing housing economy produces slow violence, building up over many years, gradually worsening as families grow, "unhoming" them as situations become intolerable, while "waiting" is a test of endurance: How long can the circumstances be tolerated before the option of displacement from the territory they are entangled with has to be taken? For some, the violence comes more quickly through an eviction notice disturbing an apparently secure situation, though the violence would have been accumulating, unseen in the impact of the economy and subsequent decisions being considered in the boardrooms of housing providers. The violence was embodied as stress and anxiety growing over time, often normalised, and as the next section shows, not fully appreciated until the stress was removed by moving to their new CLT homes.

4.3. Frequenting New Territory at St Clements

According to another former chair of London CLT, Phil, identifying St Clements as a potential site for a development provided an animating and energising moment:

> I always had a problem with the CLT that it was like this abstract concept…we then rooted it in a particular neighbourhood, [and] local people wanted to get involved with it….Families could see

> themselves in their cramped accommodation thinking, "oh, you could make that really nice, and we could live there."

Approaching the Greater London Authority with the idea, the site was put out to tender (Bunce, 2016; Smith, 2020). London CLT's original ambition was for the whole site to be a CLT, offering affordable housing for rent. However, this was discounted in discussions with development partners; housing economics and London CLT not being a registered social landlord meant a small percentage of the homes in the bid would be CLT homes and they would be for sale. A major construction company won the bid, but further lobbying produced a deal supported by London's mayor whereby 23 of the 252 homes were sold to London CLT at a cost allowing onward sales affordable to average-income earners in Tower Hamlets.

Lefebvre (1991, p. 103) argued that any alternative urban society needs a "practico-material base, a morphology" and London CLT wanted not just to build homes but to assemble an affective community, spreading its ethos. Geoff said residents would act as:

> A sort of animating group within the whole development…become the sort of movers and shakers to help other people to integrate and feel part of the community there….One of the things we did with the selection criteria…[was] to gauge whether the people would be a fit with what we were trying to do in the longer term, which was to develop [a] community.

London CLT's agreement with the developers included a community-planning refresh of their designs, while a film festival was hosted onsite. St Clements was a workhouse before it was a psychiatric hospital and Phil recognised the challenge:

> How do you take historically quite a sad place in the local community and reinvent its image as a welcoming one….The building became…a character within the campaign, you know, that we got people to associate with…it created relationships, people knew each other, they got involved…it became a feature of the neighbourhood.

Brighenti and Kärrholm (2020) describe such events as "animistic moments." After the long, slow opposition of the campaign, the territory reveals itself in "precise, punctual moments, with crucial morphogenetic import" (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2020, p. 113). Further animistic moments followed when residents were selected and brought together for community-building events before moving in, shifting the emphasis to "frequentation." The new rhythms provide a stark contrast to those residents experienced where they lived before, with interviewees reflecting on the importance of the emotional and physical qualities of home (Richardson, 2019). Ray described the first few weeks:

> I remember each time you opened the door you just got that sound of that perfect seal around the door. And you got the smell of fresh paint. And it was, the carpet was so soft and clean…it's that new car smell, that new trainer smell, for ages, every time we opened the front door, just to get hit with that freshness.

Nathalie described the combination of factors constituting both her home and her territorial associations, while acknowledging the challenges for the Resident Management Company once they take responsibility: a transfer of power constantly postponed by the developer's perpetually delayed completion.

> It utterly transformed our lives. And although these problems, such as they are, they are a bit all-consuming at times…we have our own home, which is big enough, in the place that we've we set down roots 20 years ago, with, you know, a park, cemetery park down there, green space over there, the canal there, you know, the schools that, the friends, the neighbours, I mean, that's still there every day.

Nancy was able to move to a three-bedroom home and reflected on the benefits of being able to frequent the new space and the rhythms that her housing now affords:

> I feel now like I have a place which is home…where I can retreat and have my own space and recharge and rest….I walk to and from work pretty much every day up along the canal and back again….It really helps me decompress….I might be chewing things over but by the time I'm here, it's just like, home now, I can, I can just relax.

Lefebvre asked, "what is it that a buyer acquires when he [sic] purchases a space? The answer is time" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 356). Ella and John regained the time previously devoted to finding a solution to their dire housing circumstances. Ella reflected on "the security of not having to think, not having to devote any further emotional, intellectual labour on where do we live? That weight…being lifted, I felt different…a sense of life is a bit lighter."

For Ella, home "is my nest," allowing a more private performance of self than a public-facing job requires. Ella and John are one of four couples who had their first child after moving to St Clements, something that leaves less time for the functional and expressive aspects of territory: the formation of the Resident Management Company and organising community events. A full assessment of this aspect of life at St Clements is beyond this article's scope, however, frequentation of home and new territory establishment involves both affective, neighbourly relations, and the establishment of distance (Brighenti, 2010). While the developer's failure to relinquish power has provided a block on resident control, from a temporal perspective, most residents have experienced difficulties in accommodating their rhythms of involvement with "other rhythms and commitments of work, family or domestic life" (Lyon, 2019, p. 54). Alice though wants to avoid St Clements drifting towards slow accession to life's demands, calling for the rediscovery of the spirit of experimentation that saw its creation in the first place: "Let's continue…with the understanding and the openness that it might cause some crazy tension. But I think that's also good…sometimes just silence doesn't actually mean it's good….I'd love to support people to be able to experiment."

5. Discussion

The impact of the housing crisis on London's middle-income earners is "spatially dispersed," in pockets of the private-rented sector, shared ownership, key-worker accommodation, property guardianship, and in struggles to maintain increasing mortgage payments. Despite being more hidden than other forms, both in its diffusion and the apparent social privilege of its occupiers, Richardson and Moreira (2023, p. 11) argue that "this feeling of insecurity or lack of safety is a form of homelessness…'home' is lacking."

Applying a slow violence lens to examine the harm caused to those unable to secure a suitable home, and enduring housing conditions that could lead to poor physical and mental well-being, is part of a "structural 'violence turn'" in housing and health studies (Gurney, 2023, p. 237). Rather than being an outcome of

personal failure or poor life choices, limited housing options are attributed to the political economy of successive governments, the actions of corporations and the array of post-political partnerships (Poynter, 2009) that have engrained inequality into London's housing system. Setting St Clements in the context of the East End's development shows how decisions taken at the outset of industrialisation still shape the system today, adding to the understanding of violence as both slow and cumulative, with subsequent decisions reinforcing the status quo, widening the equality gap, and deepening urban trauma (Pain, 2019). The gap makes those without the protection of housing and financial wealth more susceptible to the occasional shock of "fast violence"—from global financial meltdowns to eviction threats.

It might be argued that it weakens the potency of a concept initially intended to highlight the plight of the world's poorest and marginalised, the "wretched of the earth" (Fanon, 2001), by its application to those who may earn upwards of £50 K per year in the metropolis. It is, however, a feature of slow violence that it often goes unrecognised, while simultaneously grinding people into submission. Rannila (2021, p. 239), who raises similar concerns about terminology, argues that "to understand the specificities of post-welfare housing, it needs to be regarded as processual, slow violence that occurs more in discourses, conditions and invisibilisations than in the direct acts of violence."

For interviewees, psychological temporal displacement arose from the feeling of precarity, articulated in endless conversations behind closed doors about where to move to when it is no longer financially sustainable to stay in a place they have come to call home. This was in addition to the known health impacts of overcrowding and poor conditions. St Clements came along at the right time to prevent spatial dispersal to places without the same connections. For many others before, and since, it would have been that or continuing to endure the harm inflicted on them. Gurney (2023) argues that while social harm offers radically new ways of thinking about the meaning of home, a rallying cry for action, and a way of evaluating housing and health policies, more work is needed to refine the conceptualisations. The findings of this article would support that call.

Terminology describing the housing crisis will always be important. Meek (2024, p. 11) argues that language can disguise the calculated structuring of the housing and political economy as natural occurrences: a "perfect storm" to describe the factors behind the "current surge of homelessness," for example. Despite all that is known about the impact of the 1980s deregulation of financial markets, the right-to-buy, failure to build enough houses, and the financialisation and gentrification of social housing in London, Meek (2024, p. 11) argues that the reverberations of the housing crisis are "so sharp, the contingent symptoms so extreme and various, that it seems like a vast natural phenomenon…a tsunami." This vastness of the problem and urgency of finding solutions can raise doubts about whether the slow opposition represented by CLTs is worth advocating for, falling back instead on solutions of speed and volume in planning and housebuilding. In their 2024 pre-election manifesto, the incoming Labour Government prioritised injecting speed into the planning process, pledging both to "ensure local communities continue to shape housebuilding" and to use "intervention powers to build the houses we need" (The Labour Party, 2024, p. 36). While the latter may open new tensions between developers and local residents, in March 2025, the Government ended a period of financial uncertainty by announcing a £20 million funding scheme to support new CLH developments (UK Government, 2025). Meanwhile, following an investigation, the London Assembly's Housing Committee has produced a report calling for more land and finance to support CLH in the capital (London Assembly, 2025).

While this one case study does not allow for empirical generalisation, it does allow for theoretical generalisation (Yin, 2013), especially when "triangulated" with similar analyses of London CLT's Citizens House development (Read, 2025; Read et al., 2024). Applicants there were similarly affected by the impact of slow violence in southeast London, and as with those who moved to St Clements, lacked control over time leading to the forced endurance of unsatisfactory housing situations. They reaped the benefits of moving to a CLT home made possible by the slow opposition of local campaigners over an 11-year period. However, the aim of this article is not necessarily to make a claim that CLTs have a greater place in housing strategies but to argue that their approaches are worth further consideration, especially, in the case of London CLT, in the way that may provide an affordable solution to the impact of slow violence for those on middle incomes. While the benefits residents have found could be delivered by other housing forms or changes of circumstances, this need is currently poorly met. Affordability and security often mean spatial displacement, while maintaining a sense of belonging may involve enduring unsuitable conditions (Read & Emery-Wright, 2023).

While their process of land development itself is not inherently slower, since St Clements, London CLT has built only 11 more homes: a total of 34 in the 17 years since their 2007 formation. It is not for want of trying, and there are several schemes at various stages of planning, as there are for other CLTs in the capital (CLH London, n.d.). However, to date, only one other CLT, the Rural Urban Synthesis Society, has built homes in London: 38 in Lewisham taking 15 years from conception to completion (Rural Urban Synthesis Society, 2024). Again, these should not be considered failures on behalf of the CLTs but an indication that a focus on genuine community involvement, relationship building, and collaborative design and build approaches are out of kilter with the approach of the mainstream market, state, and housing association providers (Jarvis, 2015). The current pace may also represent a slow start while adapting to the changing policy and fiscal environment, but could be a gradually gathering momentum, having "broken-the-ground" with their initial developments.

CLTs in London are reliant on land in public ownership being donated free or cheaply to ensure affordable homes are built. If public bodies are not building on the land themselves, they are bound by the impact of austerity and financial rules that bind them to "best consideration" for the value of the land (UK Government, 2003). This may change given the recent Government announcement and the recommendation of the London Assembly's Housing Committee. However, ending housing inequality requires disruption at far more significant scales, across all tenures, if the violence is not to grind slowly and inexorably on.

6. Conclusion

This study shows the relevance of slow violence and slow opposition to territorial dynamics and housing inequalities across scales in East London, using St Clements to analyse the effects of a CLT approach on the lived experiences of residents earning average incomes. Relief from the slow violence of the housing crisis came from having a home that met their household needs: allowed them privacy, was affordable, of decent quality, safe, and provided long-term security for themselves and their families. They have prolonged their sense of belonging to the neighbourhood they call home, gained greater control over time, which is no longer marked by endurance, and built new relationships with those they now share space with. Even at a discount, buying property has meant buying time (Lefebvre, 1991). Slow violence and slow opposition came together for the 23 households, producing an energetic period of animistic moments which has since slowed to a pace determined by how each household wants to frequent their territory. For most, rhythms

of family, work and social lives dominate, and the everyday conviviality amongst neighbours is highly valued. Having gained their "right to the city" through a foothold in the capital, new temporal bridges are being forged between the rhythms of the CLT's public sphere, and their familial, work, and social rhythms. Building and nurturing meaningful place-based relationships takes time (the rupture of which in gentrification, is one of the harms resulting from slow violence) and the long-term ethos promoted by London CLT (slow opposition and community curation) perhaps embodies temporal impositions that may be at variance with some rhythms of the couples and families they offer the chance of home to. If slow violence is to be countered by more than slow opposition, the lessons of what works in these small experimental schemes need to be learned, and understanding the significance of their poly-rhythmic integrations may offer a revealing starting point.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank past and present board members and staff of the London CLT and especially the residents of St Clements for so generously giving their time to take part in the research that enabled this article. The authors would also like to thank this article's reviewers for their insightful and extremely helpful comments.

Funding

The research for this article was funded by an Anglia Ruskin University Vice-Chancellor's Studentship.

Conflict of Interests

During his PhD research, the first author took part in a project with London CLT, funded by the Guy's & St. Thomas' Foundation Trust, investigating CLTs and urban health; payment was received for research relating to members of London CLT's local community steering groups, unrelated to this article. All other authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

References

Alexander, T. (2022, July 13). Exactly where is and where isn't in London's East End. *My London*. https://www.mylondon.news/whats-on/arts-culture-news/where-is-londons-east-end-24482424

Archer, T., & McCarthy, L. (2021). *Community-led housing and the speed of development: Briefing note*. Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research. https://nationwidefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Speed-of-Development-Briefing-Note-Final.pdf

Arrigoitia, M. F. (2014). Un making public housing towers: The role of lifts and stairs in the demolition of a Puerto Rican project. *Home Cultures*, *11*(2), 167–196. https://doi.org/10.2752/175174214X13891916944634

Back, L., Keith, M., Khan, A., Shukra, K., & Solomos, J. (2009). Islam and the new political landscape: Faith communities, political participation and social change. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *26*(4), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409104965

Balazard, H., Fisher, R., & Scott, M. (2017). The "big society" in the United Kingdom: Privatisation or democratisation of public services. *Revue française d'administration publique*, *163*, 507–520. https://shs.cairn.info/article/E_RFAP_163_0507?tab=texte-integral

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge.

Bridge, G. (2007). A global gentrifier class? *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, *39*(1), 32–46. https://doi.org/10.1068/a38471

Brighenti, A. M. (2010). On territorology: Towards a general science of territory. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *27*(1), 52–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409350357

Brighenti, A. M., & Kärrholm, M. (2018). Beyond rhythmanalysis: Towards a territoriology of rhythms and melodies in everyday spatial activities. *City, Territory and Architecture*, *5*, Article 4. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40410-018-0080-x

Brighenti, A. M., & Kärrholm, M. (2020). *Animated lands: Studies in territoriology*. University of Nebraska Press.

Bunce, S. (2016). Pursuing urban commons: Politics and alliances in community land trust activism in East London. *Antipode*, *48*(1), 134–150. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12168

Butler, T., Hamnett, C., & Ramsden, M. (2008). Inward and upward: Marking out social class change in London, 1981–2001. *Urban Studies*, *45*(1), 67–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098007085102

Community Land Trust Network. (n.d.). *What is a community land trust?* https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/about-clts/what-is-a-community-land-trust-clt

Community Led Housing London. (n.d.). *Community led housing projects in London*. https://www.communityledhousing.london/projects

Dench, G., Gavron, K., & Young, M. (2006). *The new East End: Kinship, race and conflict*. Profile.

Diacon, D., Clarke, R., & Guimaraes, S. (2005). *Redefining the commons: Locking in value through community land trusts*. Building & Social Housing Foundation.

Elliott-Cooper, A., Hubbard, P., & Lees, L. (2020). Moving beyond Marcuse: Gentrification, displacement and the violence of un-homing. *Progress in Human Geography*, *44*(3), 492–509. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519830511

Fanon, F. (2001). *The wretched of the earth*. Penguin.

Fenton, A. (2016). *Gentrification in London: A progress report, 2001–2013*. London School of Economics.

Fullilove, M. T. (2020). Revisiting "The Frayed Knot": What happens to place attachment in the context of serial forced displacement? In L. C. Manzo & P. Devine-Wright (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 177–192). Routledge.

Glynn, S. (2005). East End immigrants and the battle for housing: A comparative study of political mobilisation in the Jewish and Bengali communities. *Journal of Historical Geography*, *31*(3), 528–545. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2004.07.019

Gotora, E. (2022, July 26). The Olympic legacy has proved to be bittersweet, but still shows the power of communities. *Citizens UK*. https://www.citizensuk.org/about-us/news/the-olympic-legacy-has-proved-to-be-bittersweet-but-still-shows-the-power-of-communities

Gurney, C. M. (2023). Dangerous liaisons? Applying the social harm perspective to the social inequality, housing and health trifecta during the Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, *23*(2), 232–259. https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2021.1971033

Hill, S., Harrington, C., & Archer, T. (2020). Messy is good! Origins and evolution of the CLT movement in England. In J. Emmeus Davis, L. Algoed, & M. E. Hernández-Torrales (Eds.), *On common ground: International perspectives on the Community Land Trust* (pp. 115–142). Terra Nostra Press.

Hodkinson, S. (2020). *Safe as houses: Private greed, political negligence and housing policy after Grenfell*. Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526154644

Hubbard, P. (2016). Hipsters on our high streets: Consuming the gentrification frontier. *Sociological Research Online*, *21*(3), 106–111. https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.3962

Hughes, P. (2024). Regional intermediary actors and professionalism in community-led housing: Implications of

the enabler hub network in England. *Housing Studies*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2024.2439455

Jameson, N. (2019, December 12). *Neil Jameson on the rich history of community organizing in London's East End* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH2Lq7ZRT9g

Jarvis, H. (2015). Community-led housing and "slow" opposition to corporate development: Citizen participation as common ground? *Geography Compass*, *9*(4), 202–213. https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12206

Keller, J. (2024). The slow violence of waiting in the unmaking of public housing. *Urban Geography*, *45*(7), 1256–1266. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2024.2377439

Kern, L. (2016). Rhythms of gentrification: Eventfulness and slow violence in a happening neighbourhood. *Cultural Geographies*, *23*(3), 441–457. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474015591489

Kruger, R., DeFilippis, J., Williams, O. R., Esfahani, A. H., Martin, D. G., & Pierce, J. (2020). The production of community in community land trusts. *City & Community*, *19*(3), 638–655. https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12452

Kvale, S. (2012). *Doing interviews*. Sage.

le Grand, E. (2020). Representing the middle-class "hipster": Emerging modes of distinction, generational oppositions and gentrification. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *23*(2), 184–200. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549418772168

Lees, L., & Hubbard, P. (2022). "So, don't you want us here no more?" Slow violence, frustrated hope, and racialized struggle on London's council estates. *Housing, Theory and Society*, *39*(3), 341–358. https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2021.1959392

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Blackwell.

London Assembly. (2025). *Building community power: Expanding Cooperative Housing & Community Land Trusts in London*. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-04/Coops%20and%20CLT%20report%20-%20Proofed_for%20embargo%20FINAL%20v6.pdf

London Borough of Tower Hamlets. (2017). *Driffield road conservation area: Character appraisal and management guidelines*. https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Planning-and-building-control/Development-control/Conservation-areas/Driffield_Conservation_Area_Character_Appraisal_and_Management_Guidelines.pdf

London Community Land Trust. (n.d.). *St Clements, Mile End, Tower Hamlets*. https://www.londonclt.org/st-clements

Lyon, D. (2019). *Rhythmanalysis?* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Malterud, K. (2012). Systematic text condensation: A strategy for qualitative analysis. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, *40*(8), 795–805. https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494812465030

Meek, J. (2024). *Market forces and malpractice*. London Review of Books. https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n13/james-meek/market-forces-and-malpractice

Moore, T. (2018). Replication through partnership: The evolution of partnerships between community land trusts and housing associations in England. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, *18*(1), 82–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616718.2016.1198084

Moore, T. (2021). Planning for place: Place attachment and the founding of rural community land trusts. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *83*, 21–29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.02.007

Moore, T., & McKee, K. (2012). Empowering local communities? An international review of community land trusts. *Housing Studies*, *27*(2), 280–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2012.647306

Moore, T., & Mullins, D. (2013). Scaling-up or going viral? Comparing self-help housing and community land trust facilitation. *Voluntary Sector Review*, *4*(3), 333–353. https://doi.org/10.1332/204080513X671931

Mullins, D. (2018). Achieving policy recognition for community-based housing solutions: The case of self-help housing in England. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, *18*(1), 143–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2017.1384692

Mullins, D., & Moore, T. (2018). Self-organised and civil society participation in housing provision. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, *18*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2018.1422320

Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Harvard University Press.

Office for National Statistics. (2023a). *Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2022*. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/2022

Office for National Statistics. (2023b). *How life has changed in Tower Hamlets: Census 2021*. https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E09000030

Pain, R. (2019). Chronic urban trauma: The slow violence of housing dispossession. *Urban Studies*, *56*(2), 385–400. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018795796

Poynter, E. L. G. (2009). The 2012 Olympic games and the reshaping of East London. In R. Imrie, L. Lees, & M. Raco (Eds.), *Regenerating London* (pp. 146–162). Routledge.

Preece, J., & Flint, J. (2024). Unhoming, trauma and waiting: The Post-Grenfell Building Safety Crisis in England. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *48*(1), 94–110. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.13213

Rannila, P. (2021). Housing violence in the post-welfare context. *Housing, Theory and Society*, *39*(2), 238–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2021.1925340

Read, R. (2025). *CLTs and urban health: A case study of London CLT's Citizens House, Sydenham*. London Community Land Trust. https://www.londonclt.org/_files/ugd/9b1760_91dea857979b45e08686cd10929a8d2b.pdf

Read, R., & Emery-Wright, H. (2023). The value of community-led housing [Special section]. *Town & Country Planning*, *92*(5), 337–339. https://www.tcpa.org.uk/healthy-homes-special-issue

Read, R., Hirst, A., Pooley, A., & Odeleye, N.-D. (2024). Negotiating shared lives: Territorialisation and conviviality in an urban community land trust. *Social Sciences*, *13*(11), 574. https://hdl.handle.net/10779/aru.27376908.v1

Richardson, J. (2019). *Place and identity: The performance of home*. Routledge.

Richardson, J., & Moreira, F. (2023). *Homeful: Exploring housing-led approaches to resolve and prevent homelessness*. De Montfort University. https://www.cih.org/media/t4jfwewu/homeful-main-report-2023digital.pdf

Roman Road London. (2021). *The tragic history of Saint Clements Hospital*. https://romanroadlondon.com/saint-clements-hospital-history

Rose, D. (1996). Economic restructuring and the diversification of gentrification in the 1980s: A view from a marginal metropolis. In J. Caulfield & L. Peake (Eds.), *City lives and city forms: Critical research and Canadian urbanism* (pp. 131–172). University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442672987-010

Rural Urban Synthesis Society. (2024). *Church grove in the news*. https://www.theruss.org/2024/06/28/church-grove-in-the-news

Sack, R. D. (1983). Human territoriality: A theory. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *73*(1), 55–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1983.tb01396.x

Sennett, R. (2013). *Together: The rituals, pleasures and politics of cooperation*. Penguin.

Smith, D. (2020). London Community Land Trust: A story of people, power and perseverance. In J. Davis, L. Algoed, & M. E. Herandez-Torrales (Eds.), *On common ground: International perspectives on the community land trust* (pp. 343–358). Nostra Press.

Storey, D. (2001). *Territory: The claiming of space*. Harloe, Pearson Education.

The Labour Party. (2024). *Change: Labour party manifesto 2024*. https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Change-Labour-Party-Manifesto-2024-large-print.pdf

The Workhouse. (n.d.). *The City of London Poor Law Union and Workhouse*. https://www.workhouses.org.uk/CityOfLondon

Thompson, M. (2015). Between boundaries: From commoning and guerrilla gardening to community land trust development in Liverpool. *Antipode*, *47*(4), 1021–1042. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12154

Thompson, M. (2020). From co-ops to community land trusts: Tracing the historical evolution and policy mobilities of collaborative housing movements. *Housing, Theory and Society*, *37*(1), 82–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2018.1517822

UK Government. (2003). *Disposal of land for less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained: Circular 06/2003*. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disposal-of-land-for-less-than-the-best-consideration-that-can-reasonably-be-obtained-circular-06-2003

UK Government. (2025). *Press release: Government paves the way for local people to build more homes*. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-paves-the-way-for-local-people-to-build-more-homes

van Hulst, M., & Visser, E. L. (2024). Abductive analysis in qualitative research. *Public Administration Review*, *85*(2), 567–580. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13856

Ward, C. (1974). *Tenants take over*. Architectural Press.

Warren, M. R. (2009). Community organizing in Britain: The political engagement of faith-based social capital. *City & Community*, *8*(2), 99–127. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01276.x

Watt, P. (2005). Housing histories and fragmented middle-class careers: The case of marginal professionals in London council housing. *Housing Studies*, *20*(3), 359–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673030500062244

Watt, P. (2013). "It's not for us": Regeneration, the 2012 Olympics and the gentrification of East London. *City*, *17*(1), 99–118. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2012.754190

Watt, P. (2021). *Estate regeneration and its discontents: Public housing, place and inequality in London*. Policy Press.

Watt, P., & Minton, A. (2016). London's housing crisis and its activisms: Introduction. *City*, *20*(2), 204–221. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2016.1151707

Westbrook, M., Muñoz, S., & Auerbach, J. (2024). "The chaos of not knowing": Embodied experiences of waiting for public housing redevelopment and relocation. *Social Science & Medicine*, *359*, Article 117266. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.117266

Wills, J. (2012). The geography of community and political organisation in London today. *Political Geography*, *31*(2), 114–126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.11.003

Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation*, *19*(3), 321–332. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389013497081

Zaban, H. (2023). Notions of time in a neighborhood destined for state-led regeneration. *Urban Geography*, *44*(7), 1497–1519. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2022.2084954

About the Authors

Robert Read recently completed his PhD at ARU on residents' experiences in two urban Community Land Trusts in London. He is a research associate at the Suffolk Sustainability Institute, focusing on the private rented sector and its links to health and well-being. Formerly in local government for 30 years, his roles spanned housing, community development, and neighbourhood management. A chartered CIH member, his research interests include housing and health, and the meaning of home and community.

NezHapi-Dellé Odeleye is an urbanist with 18 years of experience across the private, third, and public sectors—as an architect, community planner, and principal planner in policy and projects. She is the course director for the MSc town planning and was previously the faculty director for research students. Her research spans sustainable design and the spatio-temporalities of Indigenous urbanism in urban design complexity. Recent work explores generative justice, planners' legacy and agency in sustainable urbanism, and how media tech shapes identity and future place-making.

Alison Hirst teaches and researches in the area of organisation studies. She has published research on the role of spaces, places, and material objects in organising, based on ethnographic or other qualitative methods. Her current research focuses on how people acquire agency through their associations with the material world. She has published in organisation studies, gender, work and organisation, and public administration and organisation.

Alison Pooley leads the Sustainable Healthy Communities theme within the Suffolk Sustainability Institute. Alison has extensive experience within higher education, particularly within built environment disciplines. Prior to her academic career, Alison worked as a housing officer in East London before retraining in architecture, where she practised for several years. Her current research focuses on community-led housing, resilience, health, and equity, bringing her professional practice full circle to address issues of provision and performance.